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must include access to quality education, access to capital, and assistance with institution building.

For women, we must make efforts to shatter the glass ceiling that limits participation at the highest levels and perpetuates the old boy network. For Asian Americans, we must seek to remove the mystery that surrounds the Asian community, when even fourth- and fifth-generation Americans are viewed with suspicion as foreign or not real Americans. I am certain, Mr. President, there are as many other worthwhile suggestions that will come forward in the coming weeks, and I look forward to considering and debating these and other suggestions. But the point is that I think the Adarand decision becomes a starting point, a take-off point for us to begin to have an honest dialog about where we are going in this Nation and how we can go there together.

While I have the utmost respect for those who come forward with new ways to provide opportunity to all, I still, frankly, find it irresponsible that some would merely seek to limit opportunity without putting forward any new proposals, folks who would suggest that repealing our current efforts to provide opportunity without proposing any new solutions. This, in my opinion, is nothing more than a thinly veiled laissez-faire attitude toward diversity that is, at best, shortsighted.

Instead of a deconstructionist approach, tearing down affirmative action and putting nothing in its place, I encourage my colleagues to join in developing creative solutions to the legacy of discrimination in this country. For guidance, I believe we can look to the countless individuals, the men and women around this country who are already working in the communities to ensure that the American dream is available for all of us and not just for some of us.

And consider for a moment the example of LISC, Local Initiative Support Corporation. LISC was established in 1979 to provide financing and technical know-how to nonprofit community organizations, know-how these groups used to develop low- and moderately affordable housing and attract commercial investments, create jobs and expand services in underserved neighborhoods. We need to build on successes such as these rather than give up on the dream of true equality in America. There are enough success stories out there, there are enough examples of people working together to forge a true network, a true quilt of diversity that will reflect the best that is America. I believe we have an obligation to look to those examples and to replicate them wherever we can.

Mr. President, also, I would like to add that while some uncertainty may surround Federal Government set-aside programs, there are a host of other activities which are in no way jeopardized by the Adarand ruling. While efforts such as the set-asides in the Small Business Act have been extremely important in helping to bring minorities into the economic mainstream, they, frankly, do not comprise the heart of this Government's efforts in regard to affirmative action.

Despite all the attention that has been focused on the set-aside program, the heart of affirmative action is not set-asides. The heart of affirmative action, on the other hand, is, in fact, to create a climate in which diversity can thrive and which allows women and minorities to succeed. The heart of affirmative action is about ensuring that the qualifications of women and minorities will be considered and not ignored.

Affirmative action does not seek to guarantee any individual a job or a contract. Rather, it seeks to give women and minorities a chance to succeed or fail, sink or swim, based on ability, not race or gender. Affirmative action, therefore, encompasses efforts such as recruiting at historically black colleges and universities, in addition to the Big Ten and Ivy League schools so that the most talented young African Americans will be considered for jobs and careers along with most talented white Americans. It includes the Executive order on affirmative action which requires the Federal contractors to maximize the percentages of women and minorities in their work force without ever requiring quotas or preferences.

In short, affirmative action is, at its heart, about ensuring equal opportunity, not equal results. Affirmative action is not a zero sum gain. It does not have winners and losers. We all win when we open up opportunity and stir the competitive pot to allow a real meritocracy to develop in this country, one that is color blind and gender neutral and does not insist that the shackles of the past are just accidents of birth for which we have no collective obligation as a Nation to remove and overcome.

Diversity is our strength, not our weakness—or it can be, anyway, so long as we do not allow those who would separate us on the basis of race or gender to prevail. This is not, Mr. President, "Let's all get along," and this is not paternalism, it is an acknowledgment that we are all in this together. We will all rise or fall, sink or swim, together as Americans. Recognizing that, let us not retreat. Instead, let us go forward together to build on the progress that has been made so far. It is in our collective and national interest that we do so. The future of our country, and nothing less important than that, hinges on our response at this time in our history to this very important longstanding issue of the character of the American society.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPETITION AND DEREGULATION ACT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 1301, AS MODIFIED

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Stevens amendment No. 1301 be modified with the language I now send to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is so modified.

The amendment (No. 1301), as modified, is as follows:

At the appropriate place insert the following:

In section 3(tt) of the Communications Act of 1934, as added by section 8(b) of the bill on page 14, strike "services." and insert the following: "services: *Provided, however*, That in the case of a Bell operating company cellular affiliate, such geographic area shall be no smaller than the LATA area for such affiliate on the date of enactment of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.".

Mr. PRESSLER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I have a unanimous-consent agreement that has been read and approved by the distinguished Democratic leader. I would be glad to yield if he has a comment to make.

Mr. DASCHLE. I thank the Senator from Mississippi for yielding. This does represent a very good-faith effort on both sides to try to accommodate all Senators who have remaining amendments, and I think that as a result of this agreement, there is a likelihood that we can finish our work in the morning and begin voting sometime in the early afternoon.

I appreciate all Senators' cooperation and hope that we can agree that as a result of this, we will finish our work tomorrow sometime. I thank the Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Democratic leader. I commend him and our leader for working together to help bring this to a conclusion. Our two committee leaders, the Senator from South Dakota and the Senator from South Carolina, have certainly done their part. We are getting close. I hope we can finish tomorrow.

## UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that debate on the 9

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